

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

VER. 1]

JOHN.

[VER. 14

WRITER. The Apostle John.

Date. Probably about A.D. 90.

Theme. The aged Apostle had written to a church which allowed one Diotrefes to exercise an authority common enough in later ages, but wholly new in the primitive churches. Diotrefes had rejected the apostolic letters and authority. It appears also that he had refused the ministry of visiting brethren (v. 10), and cast out those who received them. Historically, this letter marks the beginning of that clerical and priestly assumption over the churches in which the primitive church order disappeared. This Epistle reveals, as well, the believer's resource in such a day. No longer writing as an apostle, but as an elder, John addresses this letter, not to the church as such, but to a faithful man in the church for the comfort and encouragement of those who were standing fast in the primitive simplicity. Second John conditions the personal walk of a Christian in a day of apostasy; Third John the personal responsibility in such a day of the believer as a member of the local church. The key-phrase is "the truth" (see 2 John, Introduction).

There are three divisions: I. Personal greetings, vs. 1-4. II. Instructions concerning ministering brethren, vs. 5-8. III. The apostate leader, and the good Demetrius, vs. 9-14.

Part I. Personal greetings.

THE ^aelder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2 Beloved, I wish ^babove all things ^cthat thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4 I have no greater ^djoy than to hear that ^emy children walk in ^ftruth.

Part II. Concerning ministering brethren.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest ^gto the brethren, and to strangers;

6 Which have borne witness of thy ^hcharity before the church: whom if thou bring ⁱforward on their journey ^jafter a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, ^ktaking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 We therefore ought to ^lreceive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

After
A.D. 90.

a Elders. Rev. 4.4,5. (Acts 11.30; Tit. 1.5-9.)

b that in all things.

c Mt. 6.33.

d 1 Thes. 2. 19,20.

e 1 Cor. 4.15.

f the truth.

g love.

h Acts 15.3.

i Mt. 25.40;

Phil. 1.27.

j 1 Cor. 9. 15,18.

k Mt. 10.40.

l Mt. 23.8.

m Prov. 10. 8,10.

n Churches

(local).

vs. 6,9,10;

Rev. 1.4,

11,20. (Acts

2.41; Phil.

1.1.)

o Psa. 37.27.

p witness.

q hope.

Part III. The domineering Diotrefes.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the ^lpreeminence among them, receiveth us not.

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, ^mprating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the ⁿchurch.

11 Beloved, ^ofollow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

The good Demetrius.

12 Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear ^precord; and ye know that our ^qrecord is true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14 But I ^rtrust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.